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Good Old Days

There once was a simpler way to deal with the Soviets, Senator Henry Jackson recalled last week—and it involved another Iran crisis. In 1946 the Soviets and British agreed to end their World War II occupation of Iran, but the Soviets reneged. They increased their forces and set up autonomous regimes in the northwestern provinces of Azerbaijan and Kurdistan.

In a little-known episode of nuclear diplomacy that Jackson said he had heard from Harry Truman, the President summoned Soviet Ambassador Andrei Gromyko to the White House. Truman told Gromyko that Soviet troops should evacuate Iran within 48 hours—or the U.S. would use the new superbomb that it alone possessed. “We’re going to drop it on you,” Jackson quoted Truman as saying. “They moved in 24 hours.”